

Committee
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IC 74-2014
22 August 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Current Intelligence

SUBJECT: Comments on Proposed Intelligence Alert System

1. We like this idea very much.

2. General Graham comments that the proposal might note that systems now under development -- specifically, CONTEXT (the []-fathered scheme for a computerized text-editing capability, now being tested at NSA) -- might facilitate the rapid handling of an Alerting Memorandum. Graham also suggests that a national analyst's net ([] NOIAN), connected by a CONTEXT system, might also be helpful.

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3. We foresee some possible timing problems in your proposal. How quickly could the community coordinate and the NIOs produce a mini-SNIE of the sort you propose as an Alert? This is a question you might wish to address. (In theory, CONTEXT or something like it might solve the problem, but CONTEXT will not be with us tomorrow.) Another possible problem: specifically requiring the DCI's concurrence for an AM might slow things down. Perhaps a USIB member could go directly to the appropriate NIO.

4. The issue of NOIWON Advisories is still with us. How it might relate to your proposal, however, is something we can worry about later.

5. Do you mean to include service intelligence chiefs in your Alert system? That is one inference I can draw when you refer to USIB principals, vice members. We would urge the service chiefs to work through DIA. Perhaps, to resolve any ambiguity, you simply should refer specifically to those qualified to generate the AM process (also excluding, I should think, Treasury, FBI, and AEC as well).

6. Our draft memo to USIB concerning a reorganization of the Watch Committee accompanies these comments.

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Attachment

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MEMORANDUM FOR: USIB

SUBJECT: Revitalizing the Watch Committee

This memorandum suggests that the existing Watch Committee machinery is anachronistic and needs an overhaul. We propose that an ad hoc Community committee be formed to consider the alternatives.

1. Over the past few months, under the direction of the Acting Chairman of the Watch Committee (the Director of Current Intelligence in CIA), the Office of Current Intelligence has conducted a study of the existing Watch Committee/National Indications Center mechanism and the warning functions which it and other elements of the Community are charged with performing. Several tentative proposals for improving the warning process emerged from this study and have been discussed at some length with my staff. The DCI has now asked us to discuss the matter further with representatives of the Community, so that formal proposals can be submitted to USIB.

2. Those who have examined the problem to date have sorted it out along the following lines:

A. In terms of national intelligence, there are two distinct kinds of warning:

(1) Strategic Warning--a concept which deals with signs of an impending military attack on the United States and its overseas bases;

(2) Warning of impending lesser wars or other important international events of potentially significant interest to US

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25X1 B. The Watch Committee/National Indications Center Mechanism, originally established to deal with the first kind of warning, has been pushed more and more into the second kind, and this has diverted it from its main mission. Moreover, it has been overtaken by recent technological and organizational developments, and may not be capable of using the [REDACTED] for which one of the major justifications is Strategic Warning.

25X1 C. The existing Watch Committee/NIC mechanism probably ought to be modified so that the effort is re-directed toward the Strategic Warning problem and the search for indicators is conducted on a daily basis, attuned, inter alia, [REDACTED]. The staff needed to support this specific function could be much smaller than the existing NIC Staff.

D. The other type of warning probably ought to be handled by the on-going mechanisms of current intelligence for routine daily and weekly reporting, perhaps supplemented by new forms of inter-agency communications and new ways to alert national consumers of particular problems they might soon confront.

3. I propose the establishment of an ad hoc community committee to consider the options for revamping the Watch Committee/NIC mechanism and streamlining the warning process. With your concurrence, I will issue invitations to a meeting of such a committee to be convened in the near future and chaired by a member of my staff.

Daniel O. Graham
Lieutenant General, USA
D/DCI/IC

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